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THE ANTI-UNION.

PRICE 2D.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 8, 1799.

No. VI.

TO THE LORDS AND COMMONS OF Ireland.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

IN a moment of awful importance to our country, I address you with that reverence, which a constitutional mind ought to feel; but with a confidence which the great occasion demands, and with which I am inspired, as a subject of a Constitution *yet* free; a Constitution, for the preservation of which, you stand in the proud character of Trustees for this nation. The Cabinet of England, and the Government of Ireland, have determined on the introduction of the question of an UNION, in the next Session of Parliament, at a time, and in such a temper of the People, as that it will, I fear, shake to its centre, the tranquillity of the kingdom: and as if insult and irritation were necessary preparatives for a question, too well calculated, by its own nature, to wound the sensibility, and to rouse the passions of the nation, an Englishman, in office here, without head or heart, who mistakes prating, for reasoning, and scribbling, for writing, has published, under Patronage, a Pamphlet; and a Letter, in which scarcely any thing appears, but examples without illustration; analogies without similitude, assumptions innumerable, ignorance of historical facts, which he affects to know; and an impudence provoking and incorrigible: This Gentleman, wafted into Ireland

“QUO PRUNA ET COCTONA VENTO.”

tells the Protestant, that a Union will effectually secure his political superiority over the Catholic—that the admission of the latter to a seat in Parliament, and for that purpose, the necessary repeal of the Test-Oaths, and the Act of Supremacy and Uniformity, would amount to an acquiescence in the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Pope in this realm, and that politi-

cal equality, between Protestant and Catholic, must produce a Revolution. To the Catholic he tells, that “an opening may be left in any plan of a Union, for the future admission of Catholics to additional privileges,” that is, to that very privilege, which, in his estimation, must produce a Revolution! With ungrateful petulance, he vents his abuse upon the character and manners of the People of Ireland, collectively, and upon every class of them in particular, until his audacity, having attained its meridian altitude, falls, with the most wanton invectives, upon our national Parliament, which he wishes to annihilate. He tells you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in very plain language, that you are not, in fact, the independent Legislators of Ireland, but the machines of England; and that you betray the sacred trust reposed in you by your country, by becoming the instruments of the British Cabinet, from the basest and vilest of all possible motives. In his Pamphlet, page 12, he says, “The counsels for the Government of Ireland, are framed in the British Cabinet: the Government of Ireland is actually administered by a British Lord Lieutenant, who distributes the Patronage of the Crown: the Irish Parliament is supposed to be in a great degree subject to British Influence.” And he prescribes his Union as the only remedy for his falsely alledged degradation of the Irish Legislature, and tells the People of Ireland, that their Lords and Commons, are so irrecoverably sunk into political profligacy and baseness, that there is no hope of relief, but by extinguishing their separate existence, and by sending a few Lords and Commoners into the British Parliament, under the nearer influence of that Cabinet, which this reviler of our national character, represents as the laboratory in which your senatorial slavery is analysed and compounded:—And all this from a person, who, a few months ago, would have filled the gaols and the gibbets with such *Irish Barbarians*, as should venture to speak the tenth part of what he ventures to write: That vehicle of sedition, called THE PRESS, in its hottest career of virulence, never ventured to utter against our Parliament, a calumny so foul and gross, as that which is now written against it by this Herald of Prostitution; and if I had not been ap-

prized that this extraordinary production had come from an official hand, I should have mistaken it for the work of a conspirator, who had renewed his efforts to rekindle the flame of religious animosity and murder, and to justify the enormities of the Irish Directory: In one place he says, that after the Union "there will be no clashing of distinct interests" between the two nations: and in another, "that the interests of England *must ever preponderate*," and "that a *preference* will always be given to her." Well done! thou honest Statesman! Thou deep, consistent, political reasoner! In his Letter in the D. Ev. Post, of the 11th of December last, in which he usurps the name of a CONSTITUTIONALIST, he dresses up a question, composed of assumptions, to his own taste, and then gravely answers it himself, after which he boldly insists that you have, by the Constitution, an authority to form a Union with the British Legislature, independent of the consent of the People of Ireland: And tho' without a Union, we certainly have our separate and independent Houses of Lords and Commons, and if a Union should take place, we would have neither the one or the other, yet this stunted grammarian, with a verbal trifling, commensurate to his intellect, insists that the formation of a Union, which must give away from Ireland the separate and independent existence of her two Houses of Parliament, is not a transfer of either! He undertakes to *demonstrate* your authority, independent of the People, by saying, that Lord Somers, a great Lawyer and Statesman, drew up the Bill of Rights, and the Articles of the Scotch Union; and he concludes his *demonstration*, by consigning his adversary to his ignorance of Lord Somers, and marches off triumphantly, hooting at (what he calls) technical logic, and *ideal shadows*. The prominent feature of this Gentleman's political character, appears to be incurable arrogance; yet it is astonishing, that he should have imagined that the established rights, the understanding, and the spirit, of a free people, could be scribbled away, amidst the *jejune* trash of any little *minister*, or any little *man*, who thinks himself a minister. I quit this gentleman for a while, to come to the main object of my address to you; and I lay it down as an irrefragable position, that the Constitution of Ireland is the indisputable property of the nation, and not of its Parliament. You, my Lords, acting your part in one great branch of this Constitution, form the dignified stay between the King and the People, in all matters of a legislative nature: You are also invested with the supreme judicial authority in all causes involving the

life, liberty and property, of the subject. No enlightened man has ever yet asserted that this transcendent power has been committed to you by the Constitution, for your own exclusive benefit; or that thereby that branch of the Constitution, which you thus occupy, was to become your absolute property, to be disposed of as you may please, without the express and special consent of the nation which first made the Constitution, and then appointed the several bodies of the Parliament, to act their distinct parts on the distinct branches of it: You are in fact, my Lords, but Trustees in your Parliamentary capacity, and therefore answerable to your country for the property of the people thus committed to your care, the separate existence of which, you have no right to consent to destroy, or transfer, without their special authority for that purpose. As to you, Gentlemen, who more peculiarly represent the People of Ireland in their separate and independent Commons' House of Parliament, I do, in the name of my country, solemnly enter my protest against even a colour of authority vested in you, to give up, extinguish, or transfer, your separate and independent existence as a branch of our legislature, without the special and express direction of your Constituents, from whom alone you derive your Parliamentary existence: When you were elected, the term of your delegation was clearly defined by the settled law of the land: Now, Gentlemen, let me intreat you to lay your hands upon your hearts, and say, whether at the time when your Constituent was giving his vote for your election, it ever entered into the mind of any honourable member among you, that he committed, or intended to commit, to you, not only the sacred trust of making laws for him, during the defined term of your delegation, but also full authority to destroy for ever, that separate and independent branch of Ireland's Constitution, into which he was sending you to act for his benefit? The very idea outrages every principle of Constitution, common justice, and common sense. Let me suppose the Union formed without the special consent I have mentioned: The Act which compleats the Union, must bring on a dissolution of the Irish Parliament, and send you back upon a political level with your fellow-subjects: Suppose a Constituent should address one of you in these terms:—

"Sir, you solicited my vote for your election to represent me in the separate and independent Commons of Ireland. You promised a faithful discharge of the trust, and you became the object of my confidence. During the term

defined by law I entrusted to you the stupendous power to concur in making laws affecting every thing dear to the heart of man. The term of your delegation is determined, and I demand from your hands that separate independent branch of the constitution which I committed to your care as my trustee, in order that I may again exercise my birth-right, and choose another person in your stead."

Can there be one Irishman among you of such callousness of conscience, so dead to all sense of shame, as to be able to meet the indignant eye of his betrayed constituent, conscious that he had consented to the utter extinction of the subject matter of his trust? There never was, and I hope there never will be, one Irish member in your honourable assembly miscreant enough, to put himself into a situation to be so questioned by his constituents. May the manly answer of J. C. Beresford to the Guild of St. Loy, never be forgotten by my fellow-citizens of Dublin.

I have, my Lords and Gentlemen, denied, as I ever shall deny, your authority, as members of our Parliament, to consent to the destruction of the separate and independent existence of the two great branches of the constitution, which you fill, without the consent of the majority of the people of Ireland. By this I do not mean to insinuate any distrust of your integrity; but, I am sure, that the Parliament of a free country cannot be displeased at the anxiety of an Irishman trembling for the peace and the fate of his country, if, upon a question of such incalculable value to millions yet unborn, he rests his chief dependence upon the unchangeable point of constitutional right. I have endeavoured to prove your want of the authority, upon the principles of the constitution, and of common justice, to bring about such a *revolution*—I say, a revolution; because, if the mere removal of the crown of England from one branch of the same family to another, still preserving the three great branches of the constitution unimpaired, be a revolution, surely, it is much more so, to annihilate the separate existence of the Lords and Commons of Ireland. But, if my own strength be too faint for the purpose, permit me to supply the defect from the highest authority. In the session of 1716, the famous septennial bill passed the Lords, and was sent down to the Commons of England. In the speech of Sir Robert Raymond, afterwards Lord Raymond, and Chief Justice of England, upon the subject of that bill, you will find the following remarkable passages:—

"Sorry should I be to suppose, we had any allies who refused to treat with us, because we refused to *relinquish* our constitution. Will not the people say, with reason, if this bill shall pass, that, when the original term of your delegation is elapsed, you are no longer *their* representatives. In my opinion, the King, Lords, and Commons, can no more *continue* a Parliament beyond its natural duration, than they can *make* a Parliament." Here, then, we have the opinion of a great English lawyer, that Parliament had no power to extend the duration of the trust committed to them—that the exercise of such a power would be a *relinquishment* of the constitution—that the members of the House of Commons would not, during the additional term, be the representatives of the people—and, that the three estates of the constitution had no power to extend the term of delegation one day longer than was settled and defined by law, at the time when the delegation was made. I cannot presume to affront your understandings, or your feelings, by asking, what, you think, would have been the opinion of that great constitutional lawyer, if he were questioned as to the power of the King, Lords, and Commons, to extinguish, for ever, the separate and independent legislative authority of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain? And yet our English pamphleteer has the matchless effrontery to tell the people of Ireland, that the meditated Union, which is to have precisely the same effect upon the Lords and Commons of Ireland, is a change only in the form, but not in the essence of the constitution!

I am extremely unwilling to impute wicked intentions to any man; but I cannot help observing, that the lucubrations of this gentleman, and of his auxiliaries, in the task of promoting an Union, seem to manifest a selection of topics, calculated to sink the spirit, and to degrade the character of the nation, and to make the people look with horror and disgust upon those establishments and orders in society, which they have been always accustomed to regard with veneration and love. The eye of the public has been ever lifted towards the august assembly in our House of Lords with profound respect. The Commons of Ireland, as emanating immediately from the people, have been uniformly the objects of our respect, mixed with strong emotions of sensibility and affection. Of late, in particular, every loyal heart in the nation glowed with confidence in, and gratitude to, both our Houses of Parliament, by whose over-awing presence, vigi-

lance, and incessant labours, under God, the country has chiefly been rescued from the horrors of a most unnatural rebellion. Is this, then, the time for the foul tongue of calumny to discharge its malignant slander against the character and dignity of our Parliament? Are we now to be told, that the leading members of our legislature are in treaty with the British cabinet, for the sale of themselves, their political consequence, and their country? That English peerages, and English gold, are to be received as the rewards of the basest prostitution, and the vilest of all treachery? That the proud mind of an Irish peer, and the high spirit of an Irish commoner, would plunge themselves into a scene of iniquity, to verify the imputations of their libellers, to justify the complaints of conspirators, and to render our nobles and gentry the eternal abomination of their country, and the objects of contempt and disgust to all Europe? No, my Lords and Gentlemen, we despise the vile slander; we are truly grateful to you for the exalted part you have acted in preserving us from an unequalled rebellion, and we look to you, with proud confidence, for our deliverance from this other death-blow, now aimed at our constitution. Our country bleeds yet at every pore; religious and political rancour yet disturbs our peace, and excites our fear; the nation is not in a state of reflection; it is incapable of exercising its judgment upon a question so momentous as that of a Union. Continue, we beseech you, to pour balm into our wounds; employ your wisdom in abating the fury of our political and religious divisions; and suffer us not be approached by the terrific question of a Union, which will make our veins bleed anew, and will put the loyal men of Ireland into a situation of unequalled anxiety, whether to defend the constitution against rebellion on one side, or, from fraud and plunder on the other. We rely, firmly rely, my Lords and Gentlemen, upon your wisdom and integrity, to keep us out of such an agonizing difficulty. If, however, upon awaking from our panic and dismay, we shall find, (which I think scarcely possible) that we have been defrauded of our birth-right, our valued constitution, by any power on earth; and, particularly, if we shall discover, that the motives to such a fraud,

really are such, as we now think calumny alone can impute to you. What will be the duty of every honest man in the nation? I tremble to think of it. Yet, some choice of conduct must be made. It will be impossible to submit to the supposed treachery. May the God of eternal justice direct us! Every thing valuable and dignifying to a nation gone! And, gone by such means too! Human nature cannot, will not, bear it. The awful warning of the poet recurs to my recollection:

*“Curandum in primis, ne magna injura fiat
“fortibus et miseris: tollas licet omne quod
“usquam est auri atque argenti—
——“SPOLIATIS ARMA SUPERSUNT.”*

I am proud to declare myself, (and hope I shall ever have reason to do so) my Lords and Gentlemen,

Your devoted servant,

FITZPATRICK.

EPIGRAM.

The Cit complains, to all he meets,
That grass will grow in Dublin streets,
And cries, that—all is over.
Short-sighted blockhead, don't you see,
Your mourning should be changed to glee,
For then you'll live in *clever*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received the beautiful Fable of *Trebor*, the vision of *Pharaoh*, the *Freeholder*, and other valuable favours, which shall be attended to as soon as possible, and which should not be delayed, but, that they are necessarily postponed to prior communications.